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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PI (S. FRANCESKI AND B. ORBACH), DRL (A. ANZALDUA)
DEPARTMENT PASS USTR FOR J. BUNTIN AND A. ROSENBERG
DOL FOR J. SHEA, B. SHEPARD AND J. RUDE
US MISSION GENEVA FOR LABOR ATTACHE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [KMPI](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: OFFICIALS INSIST LABOR REFORMS COMPLETE

REF: MUSCAT 1458

11. (SBU) Officials in the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) informed Poleoff on November 1 that regulations covering union organizing, collective bargaining and the right to strike are complete, and await only Minister of Manpower Juma bin al-Juma's signature. The regulations are contained in two ministerial decisions titled "Regulations of Formation, Work and Registration of Labor Unions and the General Federation of the Workers of the Sultanate of Oman" and "Regulations of Collective Bargaining, Labor Dispute Resolution, Strikes and Closure." (ref) The regulations will be accompanied, the officials said, by an administrative circular emphasizing the illegality of withholding workers' passports and other documents. Saleh al-Amri, Director General of Labor Care, and his deputy, Yacoub al-Kharbushi, Director of the Department of Union Organizations, stated that the Minister's signature will imbue the regulations and circular with the force of law, and that they will not be subject to further review. They assured Poleoff that Minister al-Juma intends to sign the regulations immediately, and expect a public announcement in the next few days that the Ministry of Legal Affairs has published the regulations in the official gazette.

12. (SBU) The officials further stated that they expect the Sultan to issue imminently a Royal Decree that will allow unions to form more than one national representative body, or General Federation. They stated that the Decree also should amend Article 106 of the 2003 Labor Law to specifically list reinstatement as a remedy for workers wrongfully dismissed for engaging in lawful union activities. After confirming with officials in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Saleh and Yacoub assured Poleoff that the Decree currently is at the Royal Court awaiting the Sultan's approval and signature.

13. (SBU) Comment: The officials' statements come one day after the Ministry's Undersecretary of Labor, Hamad Hilal al-Busaidi, informed DCM and Poleoff that the government of Oman believed it had met its commitment to enact labor law reforms and had fulfilled its obligations under Chapter 16 of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). According to the Undersecretary and his staff, all that remains is official publication. Despite this, Post's contacts have no knowledge of an impending Royal Decree to clarify compulsory labor provisions in Article 12 of Oman's Basic Law, which is another FTA commitment. Finally, Post received copies of the two ministerial decisions and will forward informal translations to concerned Washington departments.
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